

## **Developing Interactional Competence by Using TV Series in ‘English as an Additional Language’ Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

This paper uses a combined methodology to analyse the conversations in supplementary audio-visual materials to be implemented in language teaching classrooms in order to enhance the Interactional Competence (IC) of the learners. Based on a corpus of 90.000 words (Coupling Corpus), the author tries to reveal the potentials of using TV series in ‘English as an Additional Language’ (EAL) Classrooms by employing the methods of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL). The paper specifically focuses on hyperbole in interaction through uncovering conversational sequences and embodied actions. The findings clearly show that the use of TV series can be an invaluable resource for language teachers by exposing learners to multi-modal texts that contextualise the materials used through various interactional and semiotic, as well as linguistic, resources.

**Keywords:** Audio-visual materials, materials design, TV series, humour, English as an Additional Language, hyperbole, Interactional Competence, Conversation Analysis, Corpus Linguistics

### **1. Introduction**

The new millennium has witnessed a turn regarding the implementation of technology in language learning and teaching worldwide. Following the innovations in the World Wide Web during 20<sup>th</sup> century, this new era has led way to new applications of Web 2.0 (O’Reilly 2005) tools in the language classrooms through podcasting, wikis and blogs, social networking sites and various Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) media. The emergence of these technological tools is creating a new set of dynamics leading to increased user-led content and knowledge production that is transforming higher education curriculum and instruction (Lee and McLaughlin 2007). As a result, studies with aforementioned foci have mushroomed within the context of English language teaching and learning. However, the effectiveness of the use of earlier media technologies like DVDs, television, films and in

particular TV series in language teaching and learning have remained under the shadow of innovative Web 2.0 applications. In this paper, therefore, I will depict the value of using TV series for enhancing students' Interactional Competence (IC) in English as an Additional Language (EAL) classrooms through a micro-analysis of dyadic and multi-party interactions using a Conversation Analysis (CA) methodology combined with Corpus Linguistics (CL) techniques.

Developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Harvey Sacks and his associates Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, CA is a naturalistic discipline that empirically and formally deals with the details of social action (Seedhouse 2005). Recent studies in the last decade have employed various applications of CA methodology in Applied Linguistics, and in particular language teaching and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (e.g. Hellermann 2008, 2009; Markee 2000, 2008; Markee and Seo 2009; Seedhouse 2004). In line with the aims of this paper, one particular area that CA can contribute is language teaching materials design (Seedhouse 2004, 2005). The motive for a CA-driven materials design and development emerges from the necessity to expose learners to naturally-occurring, authentic, real conversations that can be invaluable resources of audio-visual input in order to develop their interactional competence. However, considering the suggested material in this paper (TV series), one may question the suitability of a CA methodology for the analysis of interactions, reasoning from the fact that CA is a methodological tool to analyse 'naturally occurring conversations' only.

In response to this potential setback regarding the validity of this study, firstly, I would argue that the conversations in TV series and films successfully represent real-life interactions compared to the artificial dialogues mostly found in textbooks for language teaching; a fine-detailed Conversation Analysis outlined in this paper supports this argument. Secondly, evidence for the suitability of CA for analysing conversations in films was recently discussed by Lam and Webster (2009), who analysed the lexicogrammatical reflection of interpersonal relationships in conversation by drawing upon the interactions in the motion picture *Da Vinci Code* and the corresponding novel by Dan Brown. As they stated, the movie was treated as logs of 'as-if' (authors' emphasis) conversations and the social interactions occurring in the plot are similar to those which take place in real life. They further indicated that in order to derive a more comprehensive continuum of their focus of analysis, which is orientation, CA

would be very significant (p.54). Lastly, this paper uses the '*methods*' of CA to (1) show that the conversations in the TV series are similar to those in real-life and (2) to bring authentic audio-visual examples of everyday conversations to develop interactional competence, which is normally not easy to employ using the recorded and analysed 'ordinary conversational' data of professional researchers.

In order to narrow down the focus of the paper, so as to present a more in-depth understanding, I will focus on the use of hyperbole in the British TV series 'Coupling', which was aired on BBC2 from 2000 to 2004 and has enjoyed a notable audience in different parts of the globe since then. The reasons for the selection of *Coupling* as the medium and hyperbole as the particular focus of analysis in particular are diverse, and will be discussed in the following sections of the article, before the presentation of the analysis. It should be kept in mind that 'interactional competence', as the target of learners' development in this study, is defined by Young (2008) as "a relationship between the participants' employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed (p.101)". Young (ibid.) also points out that interactional competence is not an individual phenomenon, but is co-constructed by all participants in a particular discursive practice. This view of interactional competence as social and co-constructed is in line with how conversation analysts view and treat talk-in-interaction, and therefore reflects the theoretical underpinnings of the current study.

## **2. Conversation Analysis and materials design**

Issues relating to the authenticity of dialogues in language teaching materials are complex and have been hotly debated (Seedhouse 2004, 2005). For Moreno Jaen and Peres Basanta (2009), textbook conversations use artificial scripted dialogues based on someone's intuitions about what people are likely to say or in most cases drawn from written language (p. 287). Saraç-Süzer (2007) explored the beliefs of 100 Turkish pre-service teachers of English on the perceived socio-pragmatic problems of the dialogues in textbooks. She found that the teacher candidates do not trust the current course books used in Turkey. This problem was also mentioned by Carter and McCarthy (1995), who stated that there is available evidence pinpointing a lack of fit between conversational data and textbooks. According to Seedhouse (2004), "CA is well positioned to portray the similarities and differences between invented

dialogue and naturally occurring interaction, both in terms of ordinary conversation and institutional interaction” (p.228). In order to develop an understanding of the problems in teaching materials and to bring in insights from CA, many researchers have investigated naturally occurring conversations, for example telephone calls and work place conversations, in an attempt to build links to language classrooms (e.g. Bernsten 2002; Bowles 2006; Brown & Lewis 2003; Wong 2002).

Bernsten (2002) analysed pre-sequences with regards to offers, requests and invitations in ESL textbooks and found out that they do not occur as frequently as in ordinary conversations. Wong (2002) focused on different types of sequences in phone conversations found in ESL textbooks and compared them to authentic telephone conversations, which showed that the conversations in textbooks are problematic and incomplete. Seedhouse (2005, p.170) indicates that insights from CA studies such as the ones mentioned here for materials design are direct and indirect:

In an indirect approach, materials writers would choose authentic, naturally-occurring dialogues for coursebooks to illustrate phenomena such as pre-sequences uncovered by CA. A direct approach would actually teach conversational sequences and phenomena (p. 170).

As Seedhouse clearly delineates above, teaching of conversational sequences and phenomena form the basis of a direct approach. The case is more important when it comes to speaking classes, which aim to enhance interactional competence of English language learners. The applications of CA in second language (L2) speaking classes have been a focus of interest for many researchers (Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm 2006; Peng, 2007; Zhou 2006). Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) focused on the teaching of pragmatics in foreign language classes and demonstrated how this can be achieved effectively with materials informed by CA. Peng (2007) put forward that in order for the students to develop an awareness of conversational structures and patterns, teachers should incorporate authentic audio or video materials into their classes for students to transcribe and analyse. With a particular focus on group work, Mori (2002) stated that “by raising the awareness of the sequential organization of talk and explicitly teaching the procedures that they can follow to accomplish certain social actions, the instructors may be able to raise the probability that interaction during group work becomes coherent and natural”(p. 340).

In this paper, I adopt both an indirect (by uncovering conversational phenomena) and a direct (teaching through the insights gained from a detailed analysis) approach to materials development, with an aim to teach conversational phenomena by explicitly building the links between the TV series and naturally occurring discourse. Rather than focusing on deficiencies of pre-existing, invented dialogues found in course books or other sources, I will try to describe and illustrate the similarities between ordinary conversations and interactions in TV series, and claim the merits of such audio-visual data for EAL classrooms. In order to clarify the theoretical background of the study, the following section will introduce a brief account of the use of DVDs and TV series as audio-visual, multimodal input in L2 classrooms.

### **3. DVDs and TV Series as multimodal materials in language teaching and learning**

In one of the oldest studies on the integration of audio-visual media in education, Hubalek (1967) anticipated that the use of audio-visual media will gradually become as simple as that of any other established teaching aid (p.43). Although one may think that media literacy is a sine-qua-non for modern language teachers of the new millennium, recent studies (e.g. Maglić 2007) show that many teachers lack required knowledge and/or motivation to integrate multimodal materials in English language teaching. Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of studies that have investigated effectiveness of TV series and TV programs in foreign language teaching (e.g. Lontas 1992, Alcon 2005, Zanon 2006). In her empirical study, for instance, Zanon (2006) tested the efficiency of the use of the TV series *StarGate* for learning pragmatics in the EFL context. She found that, when accompanied by explicit instruction, the use of TV series may enhance language learners' pragmatic skills. A review of literature shows that the effects of DVDs in teaching and learning have been approached from various dimensions, and the review here will consider DVDs, TV series and films as multimodal materials.

With the emergence of DVDs it is assumed that media can enhance language teaching by bridging the outside world into the classroom, and making the task of learning a more meaningful one (Peres Basanta 1997). Tschirner (2001) argued that DVDs provide learners with multimodal representations that may give them access to oral communication both visually and auditory, and make the classroom conditions similar to target cultural

environment. Considering the fact that DVDs are multimodal texts, Thibault (2000) put forward that they combine and integrate the meaning making resources of more than one semiotic modality- for example language, gesture, movement, visual images, sound and so on- in order to produce a text specific meaning (p. 311). Accordingly, we can argue that TV series should be considered as input-rich resources for learners that provide audio, visual, semiotic and interactional modals. However, there are many variables in selecting appropriate DVDs in language classrooms like the proficiency level of students, age of students, the target interactional skills to be taught, curricular considerations, genre, and socio-cultural background of the learners.

Contextualisation is an integral part of any classroom activity. The context of situation is easier to present in multimodal audio-visual materials compared to traditional materials, as they represent interactions as embodied social actions through which students can make sense of. For Peres Basanta and Rodriguez Martin (2006), film discourse mimics face-to-face communication and thus provides the contextual features of everyday conversation. All in all, as Moreno Jaen and Peres Basanta (2009) state: “there is an urgent need to reconsider the design of oral materials which have been used in traditional classes so as to find space for the introduction of multimodal texts, such as DVDs, in order to plunge learners into the world of native speakers (p. 295)”. As the analysis will focus on the use of hyperbole in conversations, the following section will present a brief review of research on hyperbole held by scholars from various disciplines.

#### **4. A review of research on hyperbole**

Hyperbole is defined as a form of extremity, an exaggeration that either magnifies or minimises some real state of affairs (Cano Mora 2004). For Kreuz *et al.* (1996), after metaphor, hyperbole is the most common trope. Together with other tropes and types of figurative language, hyperbole has been studied largely within the area of literature and rhetoric. However, advancements within the areas of cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics have led many scholars to investigate the comprehension of figures of speech and hyperbole. However, as Cano Mora (*ibid.*) warns, the bulk of psycholinguistic research has relied on artificial texts as stimulus materials.

Nevertheless, the theories of figurative language and tropes discussed within the cognitive and psycholinguistic traditions (Kreuz and Roberts 1995; Colston and Keller 1998; Colston and O'Brien 2000) have brought forth useful insights concerning the comprehension of hyperboles. Moreover, recent research has shifted the focus to natural data, rather than invented sentences, by means of large corpora of spoken language. In their experiments, Winner *et al.* (1987) assessed comprehension of hyperbole (together with sarcasm and understatement) in 6-, 8-, and 10-year-olds. Their findings revealed that it is the relationship between sentence meaning and speaker meaning that determines ease of comprehension of hyperbolic utterances.

Leggitt and Gibbs (2000) looked at people's emotional reactions to different kinds of ironic language, including hyperbole, within a cognitive appraisal framework. It was found that hyperbole is more consistently correlated with the less threatening statements, such as understatement and satire. In analysing the recognition of verbal irony (including hyperbole) in spontaneous speech, Bryant and Fox Tree (2002) presented their participants with spontaneously produced ironic and non-ironic utterances from radio talk shows in written or auditory form, with or without written contextual information. The findings of their experiments suggested that both acoustic and contextual information are used when inferring ironic intent in spontaneous speech. In a more recent study, Charteris-Black (2003) took a cross-cultural comparative perspective with a cognitive semantic approach. He revealed that English has a tendency toward metonymy whereas Malay has a tendency toward metaphor, which is explained with reference to cultural differences in attitudes toward facial expressions and in stylistic preferences: English has a preference for hyperbole and Malay for euphemism. Although most of the studies mentioned so far take a different methodological perspective for the analysis of hyperbole, they have informed the discourse and corpora based studies in many ways, as it will be clear in the analysis section.

In the new millennium, many researchers (Gibbs 2000; McCarthy and Carter 2004; Cano Mora 2004) have made use of corpora for analysing the functions of tropes including hyperbole in naturally-occurring language, which has not been a reaction to the psycholinguistic experiments relying on invented sentences, but rather is claimed to be complementary to these. Considering hyperbole among five types of irony, Gibbs (2000) studied sixty-two 10-min conversations between college students and their friends. He found

that 74% of the hyperboles were viewed as humorous by at least one of the conversational participants, which is an important finding regarding the present study. The reason is that humour has the potential to engage language learners to classroom activities and tasks. The selection of the Coupling TV series and the analysis of hyperbole rely on this theoretical premise.

McCarthy and Carter's study (2004) has been an enormous step towards the analysis of tropes through the use of a large corpus. In analysing the use of hyperbole in everyday conversation, they drew upon data from their 5-million word corpus of spoken English (CANCODE) and built a framework for the description and understanding of hyperbole in interaction. They used corpus extracts from concordances generated for key lexical items within core semantic fields such as time and number to illustrate hyperbolic expressions in context.

Using a list of criteria, McCarthy and Carter (ibid.) tried to reveal the degree of an item's hyperbole-proneness. As will be the case in this paper, an item's hyperbole-proneness was identified using five basic categories and was illustrated in numerical values: (1) expressions of number (millions of, hundreds of, etc.), (2) words referring to large amounts/quantities (masses of, loads of, etc.), (3) adjective modification of amount(s) and number(s) (adjective + amounts of, etc.) , (4) time expressions (years, weeks, hours, etc.), and (5) size, degree and intensity (enormous, endless, gigantic, etc.). The categories and selection criteria that I have used to inform the analysis in this paper have also been adopted in a previous study of mine (Sert 2008). McCarthy and Carter's (ibid.) study concludes that an interactive approach to hyperbole "is indispensable for its proper understanding and the use of large corpora offers new insights with theoretical implications for the study of tropes" (p. 149).

The interactive dimension of hyperbole as an extension of the view that it is a joint activity between speaker and listener was also addressed by Cano Mora (2004), who used a data set of 10,158 words from the British National Corpus (BNC). For her study, as was the case in McCarthy and Carter's (2004) study, only spoken language was subject to analysis. Cano More (ibid.) was primarily interested in listeners' reactions to hyperbole. She developed a framework in order to reveal that listener response is crucial in understanding the nature of hyperboles. She found that relevant next contribution and back channel responses (e.g. yeah,



mm, oh, etc.) were the most recurrent pattern of listeners' responses to hyperbole, which indicates understanding of the speakers' overstatement.

Following a micro analysis of conversations using a CA methodology, this study combines the framework of McCarthy and Carter's (2004) study in order to analyse hyperbole in a British TV series and investigate their potential application in EAL classes. The humorous effect of hyperbole claimed by various studies (Long and Graesser 1988; Roberts and Kreuz 1994) is very relevant for this paper, as humour can be regarded as a useful tool for language classrooms in order that learners engage with materials being used and the tasks assigned. Together with the review of literature presented so far in the previous sections, the following methodology section will further explain the theoretical bases of the analyses and findings with regards to the value of using TV series in developing the interactional competence of the learners in EAL classrooms. It should be noted that no study on hyperbole or materials design has used CA and CL complementarily.

## **5. Methodology: the synergy between Conversation Analysis and Corpus Linguistics**

CA is a generic approach to the analysis of social interaction that was first developed in the study of ordinary conversation but which has since been applied to a wide spectrum of other forms of talk-in-interaction ranging from courtroom and news interview conduct to political speeches (Goodwin and Heritage 1990, p.284). Applied linguists have also enjoyed various methodological tools that CA has offered within the last few decades. In terms of language teaching and SLA research, Firth and Wagner's (1997) call for sensitivity to contextual and interactional aspects of language use, a broadening of the SLA database and more importantly, an adoption of a more emic and participant-relevant perspective towards SLA research had an important impact and led to a reconceptualisation of SLA research. As a qualitative methodology, CA's compatibility with other quantitative methodologies and its approach to quantification have been discussed by many researchers (e.g. Robinson 2007; Schegloff 1993). According to Seedhouse (2007):

The short and simple way to present the CA attitude to quantification would be to state that CA is a qualitative methodology that tries to develop an emic perspective, so quantification is generally of peripheral interest to CA practitioners. It has always been mistakenly reported that quantification is prohibited in CA. However, informal or methodological quantification has been widely used from the beginnings of CA (p.259).

The issue of quantification is important regarding the methodological basis of this paper, since Corpus Linguistic (CL) techniques are incorporated in the analysis. Although there are still ongoing discussions on whether CL is a discipline, methodology, or paradigm (Taylor 2008), it has proved itself as a useful tool for language analysis starting from mid 20<sup>th</sup> century within various disciplines ranging from formal linguistics to discourse studies, including spoken interaction. However, only recently have researchers started to combine CA and CL for describing, understanding and bringing insights from spoken interaction to various fields like political talk (Carter and McCarthy 2002) and classroom discourse (Walsh and O’Keeffe 2007; Walsh et al. 2008).

According to Carter and McCarthy (2002), “both approaches are concerned with explicating speakers’ implicit knowledge of their use of language, and both reject introspective data in favour of field work (p. 15)”. They analysed political interviews and showed how CA and CL can complement each other and offer a more integrated way of understanding how conversational agendas are achieved when they are used in combination. In a recent paper, Walsh and O’Keeffe (2007) investigated higher education spoken academic discourse taking the same methodological stance as Carter and McCarthy’s study. Walsh and O’Keeffe put forward that what they are gaining from this combined CA and CL approach are “insights into the ways in which particular pedagogic goals are realised through specific interactional and linguistic features” (p.127). Lastly, in a more recent study, Walsh et al. (2008) investigated (adopting the same methodological approach) vague category markers in a one million word corpus of academic spoken language (LIBEL corpus) and brought insights for understanding the complex relationship between language and learning. However, it should be noted that the studies mentioned here have not employed a fine-detailed CA analysis, which should theoretically and practically include various prosodic phenomena and visual indicators that shape embodied action like mutual gaze and bodily orientation that form embodied actions in conversation. In this paper, such variables are considered and given primary importance.

Given the methodological and theoretical support from pioneering scholars, in the following section I will perform an analysis of interactions with regards to the use of hyperbole in a British TV series (Coupling) and try to portray how the findings can contribute to materials

development and interactional competence in EAL classrooms. The analysis will include a careful, fine detailed, turn-by turn discussion of the phenomena following with a Conversation Analytic approach. This analysis, then, will be combined with frequency and concordance based evaluations drawing on Corpus Linguistic techniques. As I have described elsewhere (Sert 2008), there is a systematic criteria to decide whether a particular language use is hyperbolic or not, but space precludes a full account here (see McCarthy and Carter 2004 and Sert 2008 for details). The transcriptions used throughout the analyses are adopted from the CA transcription conventions (See Appendix 1) of Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008). For the corpus analysis, *Wordsmith Tools* software (Scott 1999) have been used, which has helped to produce frequency lists and other means of representation and analysis. The Coupling corpus consists of 90,000 words, and the hyperbole-proneness of lexical items were comparatively illustrated drawing upon McCarthy and Carter's (ibid.) findings from a five million word spoken corpus of English (CANCODE).

## 6. Data Analysis

Extracts given below are selected from dyadic and multiparty interactions in Coupling from a total of 28 episodes, each of which lasts around half an hour. All interactions reflect real life situations and ordinary conversations; couples and friends interacting in different settings like pubs, shops or houses. Therefore, it can be claimed that the conversations are well contextualised and may be used as authentic materials in language classrooms, if the analysis performed lead us to findings in this spectrum. In extract 1 below, Susan (Steve's girlfriend), Sally (Susan's best friend) and Jane (Steve's ex girlfriend) meet in a pub in London where they generally come together throughout the four seasons in the TV series. Susan and Steve are planning to buy a sofa, and Susan expects Steve to choose a colour and model from a pattern book, yet, it is well-known that it is never easy to make decisions for Steve in such situations.

### *Extract 1. Season 2 Episode 3 [08:23- 08:43].*

1 Susan: hi (0.5) sorry I'm running late.  
2 (1.0)  
3 Sally: no problem=  
4 Jane: =hi:  
5 Susan: >can't stay lo:ng (.) late night shopping with Steve> .hh  
6 we're at the ↑furniture stage.

7 Jane: good ↓lu:ck.  
8 Susan: oh >no no no> he's taken a real interest↓  
9 he's had a pattern book for a ↑wee:k  
10 ((Audience laughter sound effect))  
11 I may need both your opinions on a sofa, by the way.=  
12 Jane: → =ooh I love giving opinions (.)  
13 I've got hundreds  
14 ((Audience laughter sound effect))

The extract starts with a greeting and an excuse for being late by Susan in line 1 as she enters the pub where Sally and Jane are already present and drinking wine. In line 3, Sally accepts Susan's excuse with an 'excuse acceptance token' (no problem), and in line 4 Jane greets back which forms a greeting-greeting adjacency pair. In line 5, Susan indicates that she is in a hurry, which is also evident with the faster talk marked in the related line, and she informs the others that they are going to buy furniture with Steve in line 6. The intonation and emphasis markers in 'furniture stage' indicate a stage of their relationship, which is oriented by Steve's ex girl friend Jane in line 7 with irony. Susan shows an uptake to this irony by rejecting it in line 8, marked by repetition and increased pace of talk. The Audience Laughter Sound Effect (ALSE) in line 10 may have resulted from the contradictory propositions due to Steve's showing an interest, but having the pattern book for a week. ALSE is typical to TV series like *Coupling*, and it affects the interactions in various ways from the resulting longer pauses to mutual gazes for an extended time, which is a general finding in this corpus.



**Screen shot 1.** Season 2 Episode 3, 08:40



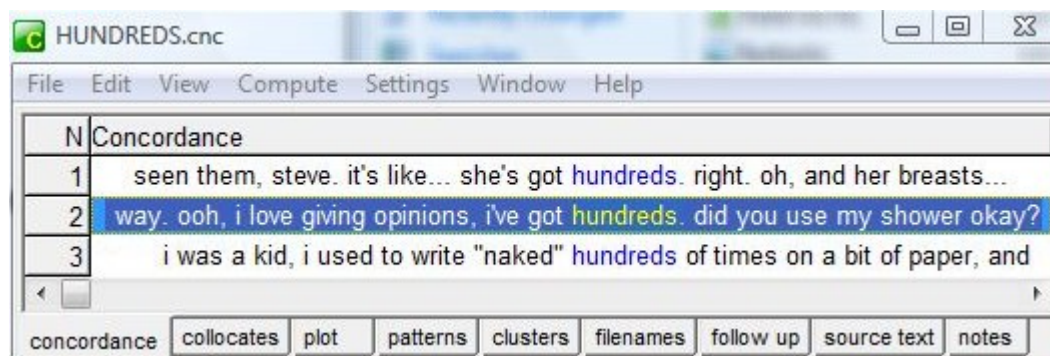
**Screen shot 2.** *Season 2 Episode 3, 08:41*

After Susan asks for her friends' opinions for selecting a sofa in line 11, with a latched turn, Jane indicates her willingness to give opinions. This is followed by a hyperbole (hundreds) within the category of 'expressions of number' (see section 4 for different categories of hyperbole), which is marked with an emphasis in initial position. However, it is not only this lexical item or the stress pattern that creates the hyperbolic effect, but also how interactants orient to this with embodied action and use of indicators of humorous exaggeration. In line 12 Jane, with a change of state token (ooh) and latching language, marks the beginning of an exaggerated reactive frame, which signals the upcoming hyperbole in the next line. Mutual gaze also plays an important role here (see screenshots given above). Whilst throughout this extract, Jane has always held her gaze on Susan, towards the end of line 11, she shifts her gaze to Sally and back to Susan; inviting both speakers to her hyperbolic use of language. The last important indication is the ALSE, which immediately follows the hyperbole, and which has been found in the majority of hyperbole occurrences in the corpus. As ALSE is an indication of humour, this claim is in line with the previous studies, which suggest that hyperbole has a humorous effect (Long and Graesser 1988; Roberts and Kreuz 1994).

	Total	Hyperbolic	Rounded	CANCODE
Hundreds	7	5	71,4 %	51%
Thousands	1	1	100 %	27 %

**Table 1** *Expressions of number (Coupling)*

Among the hyperbolic lexical items within the category *expressions of numbers* they analyzed in five million word spoken language corpus (CANCODE), McCarthy and Carter (2004, p.179) found out that 59 out of 116 occurrences of *hundreds (of)* are hyperbolic, with a hyperbole-proneness of 51% (see table 1). In Coupling corpus, only hundreds and thousands have been found to have hyperbolic effect in this category, '*hundreds*' having a hyperbole-proneness of 71.4 %, which is slightly more than the findings in CANCODE. This may be related to the intended humorous effect of the TV series, though more evidence is required for generalisation. The sample concordance lines given below illustrate the lexical environment (co-text) of this hyperbolic item. We can see that the hyperbolic usages are surrounded by change of state tokens in some of the lines. The tagged ALSE and speakers were taken off in the concordance examples in this paper for illustrative purposes; not to confuse the readers with transcription conventions, as they are already clear in CA transcriptions given in all examples. This is only one of the advantages that a combined CA and CL approach can serve.



**Figure 1.** Sample concordance lines for '*hundreds*' in Coupling corpus

**Extract 2.** Season 3 Episode 3 [12:18- 13:11].

- 1 Jeff: it is wrong .
- 2 Wilma: since when have men worried about that?
- 3 Jeff: <I I I< worry about it.
- 4 Wilma: I bet you're the only man you know who does.
- 5 Steve: I worry about it too↓
- 6 ((audience laughter effect))
- 7 Jeff: Steve worries about it too.
- 8 ((audience laughter sound effect))

9 Steve: see?  
10 (2.0)  
11 Susan: you have a girlfriend !  
12 (0.5)  
13 Jeff: I- I have a girlfriend.  
14 Wilma: so you keep saying↓ (.) so why are you here?  
15 Jeff: well, > I I I> just=  
16 Wilma: =she really does exist, this girlfriend?  
17 (0.8)  
18 Jeff: oh o- she exists (.)  
19 she's very much an existent person (.)  
20 → she's got tons of existence.  
21 ((audience laughter sound effect))  
22 (0.5)  
23 well not (.) too much existence (.)  
24 → I don't mean she's huge or anything (.)  
25 she's somewhere between completely imaginary and a truck,  
26 ((audience laughter effect))  
27 i- if you can picture that.

In this extract, Jeff and Wilma have a date in a pub, while Jeff's girlfriend is on her way to Leeds. Since Jeff does not want to cheat on her, Steve and Susan (who are in another pub) are giving him tips on the phone to avoid Wilma's moves to seduce him. In line 3, Jeff is trying to explain that he is worried about cheating on his girlfriend, and displays that he is nervous with over-repetitions of 'I' and changing the pace of his talk, which is typical to him. The repetitions are also visible in lines 13 and 15. In line 5, Steve interferes by saying he is worried about this too, which is oriented by Jeff as referring back to Steve. At this point, in lines 6 and 7, Jeff orients to his earphone with a hand movement while talking to Wilma, which is illustrated by the screenshots below. In line 11, Susan also interferes by making emphasis to his girlfriend, to which Jeff shows an uptake and repeats Susan's words to Wilma. After Jeff's nervous talk in line 15, Wilma takes the floor with a latching language and questions the existence of Jeff's girlfriend. After a short silence in line 17, Jeff again takes the floor in line 18 with a change of state token and performs an extended turn until line 27.





**Screenshot 3.** Season 3 Episode 3, 12:24.



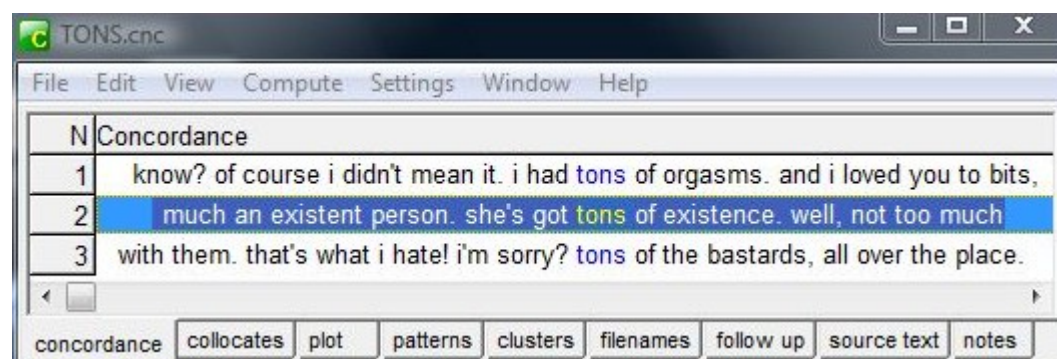
**Screenshot 4.** Season 3 Episode 3, 12:30.

In line 20, Jeff uses a hyperbolic lexical item (tons of) within the category ‘words referring to large amounts/quantities’. Jeff’s reference to his girlfriend’s existence within an exaggerated frame is followed by an ALSE in line 21, which indicates humour. Although this is not the most frequent category of hyperbole in both Coupling corpus and CANCODE, words referring to large amounts/quantities are very hyperbole-prone, as can be understood from table 2 given below. In CANCODE, 26 out of 28 uses of ‘tons of’ were found hyperbolic (McCarthy and Carter 2004, p.179). In the Coupling corpus, the hyperbole-proneness of this lexical item is 100%. The co-text of the lexical item can also inform the readers on the surrounding language of this hyperbole, which can be seen in the concordance lines given in figure 2 below.



	Total	Hyperbolic	Rounded	CANCODE
Heaps (of)	1	1	100%	100%
Tons (of)	3	3	100%	93%
Loads (of)	5	4	80%	99,4%

**Table 2.** Words referring to large amounts/quantities (Coupling)



The screenshot shows a software window titled 'TONS.cnc' with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Compute, Settings, Window, Help) and a toolbar with buttons for concordance, collocates, plot, patterns, clusters, filenames, follow up, source text, and notes. The main display area is titled 'N Concordance' and shows three lines of text where the word 'tons' is highlighted in green. Line 1: 'know? of course i didn't mean it. i had tons of orgasms. and i loved you to bits,'. Line 2: 'much an existent person. she's got tons of existence. well, not too much'. Line 3: 'with them. that's what i hate! i'm sorry? tons of the bastards, all over the place.'

**Figure 2.** Sample concordance lines for 'tons' in Coupling corpus

Going back to the qualitative analysis of extract 2, Jeff initiates another hyperbolic item (huge) in line 24. This hyperbole is again marked at stress level, and emphasized in talk, as was also evidenced in some of the previous examples. In line 25, Jeff uses some metaphors following the hyperbolic utterance, which results in an ALSE in line 26. As I have previously suggested (Sert 2008), co-occurrence of hyperbole with other tropes (like irony or metaphor) enhances its humorous effect, which is the case in this extract. As a hyperbolic item, 'huge' is within the category of 'size, degree, and intensity'. This category was found to be the most frequent one in both Coupling corpus and CANCODE, and therefore will be discussed and illustrated further in the analysis of extract 4.

In extract 3 given below, taken from the very first episode of the TV series, Susan and Steve are talking about Susan's previous experience with Jeff, which resulted in a failure. This creates, as is common for Jeff, a level of nervousness. The setting is a restaurant, in which all 6 people are present at the time, which was supposed to be Steve's and Susan's first date as a couple. Although the conversation in this extract involves 3 participants (Jeff, Susan and Steve), Jeff's bodily movements and shift of gaze (line 3) to the other 3 people who are present (see screenshots 5 and 6 below) in the restaurant indicates his willingness to distract

the focus from him, as he is nervous again. The laughter following his utterances in lines 1 and 11 is the first evidence for this. Glenn (2003) states that although laughter is most of the times associated with humour, nervous laughter is also found in everyday conversations.

***Extract 3. Season 1 Episode 1 [23:47- 24:18].***

1 Jeff: well (.) anyway , ((he laughs))  
2 here we all are on Steve and Susan's first date,  
3 isn't this great? ((looks at the other 3 people))  
4 ((audience laughter effect))  
5 let's all have dinner and mmm (.) plan the future(.)  
6 table for 6?=  
7 Steve: =Jeff Je- Jeff=  
8 Jeff: =°yeah° (.)  
9 Steve: what are you doing? (0.5)  
10 you worry we're gonna talk about you or something?  
11 Jeff: no:: ((Jeff laughs))  
12 Susan: what is there to say? (.)  
13 you know about him and me (.) right?  
14 the nervous thing?  
15 Steve: well (.) yes (.) but don't worry about it (.)  
16 → Jeff makes loads of women nervous.  
17 ((Audience laughter sound effect))

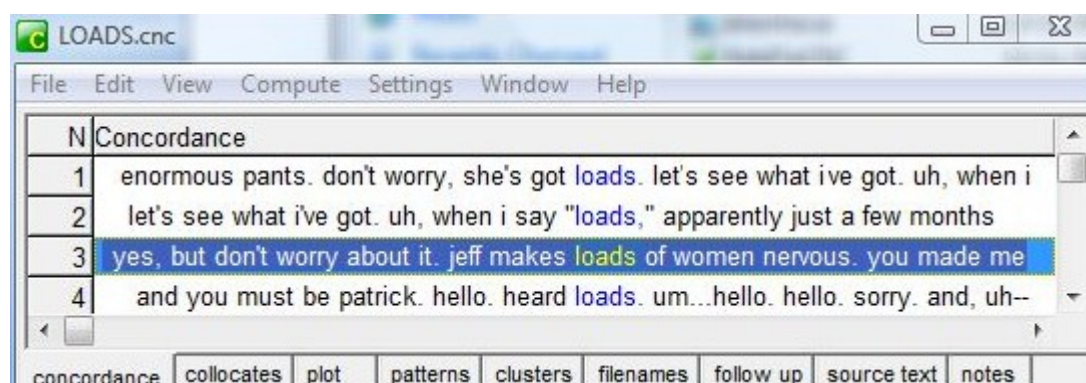


***Screenshot 5. Season 1 Episode 1, 23:50.***



**Screenshot 6.** Season 1 Episode 1, 23:53.

Steve takes the floor in line 6 after Jeff's attempt to distract the focus of conversation from him, by specifically referring to Jeff with repetition of his name and addresses him as the next speaker. Jeff's unwillingness is again observable in line 8 through his quiet response token. In line 10, Steve ascribes the mood of being worried to Jeff, which supports the argument made earlier for Jeff's nervousness. The topic, although it was resisted by Jeff, turns back to him by Susan's question in line 12 and her reference, once more, to Jeff's nervousness. In line 16, Steve initiates the hyperbolic item 'loads' (see table 2 above for frequency of this item) which is within the category of 'words referring to large amounts/quantities'. This is, as it is the general case in the data, followed by an ALSE in line 17. 'Loads (of)' has a hyperbole-proneness of 80% in Coupling corpus, and 99.4 % (787 out of 792) in CANCODE (McCarthy and Carter 2004). The concordance lines below illustrate the lexical environment of this item.



**Figure 3.** Sample concordance lines for 'loads' in Coupling corpus

In extract 4 below, Patrick and Sally are trying to solve their first relationship problem, which is caused by Patrick's intention to go to Portugal to play golf with his mates. Sally, in line 1, formulates the problem and initiates a pre-sequence (line 3) to solve the problem, which receives an uptake from Patrick with an immediate acceptance token in line 4. After 2 seconds of silence, Sally, with an imperative manner accompanied by an emphasis on the negation (not) and louder talk, asks Patrick not to go to Portugal in line 6. Following an ALSE (line 7), Patrick initiates a repair (line 8) which is an indication of disagreement rather than a request for clarification (that would be a function of 'I'm sorry' in a different context). The evidence for disagreement comes from embodied actions and the language use. In line 9, Sally tells that she is disallowing it, with a particular emphasis on the negative prefix and the accompanied hand gesture (see screenshot 7 below). In line 10, Patrick initiates another repair and orients to an argumentative talk, which is observed through his change of posture (see screenshot 8). In line 11, Sally confirms the action of disallowing and orients to the problem as a relationship norm by proposing that she is not the one to blame (apology in line 11) and she is not able to do anything for it (line 12).

***Extract 4. Season 4 Episode 1 [06:20-06:59].***

1 Sally: oka::y .hh <thiss is the ↑first problem we've  
2 encountered in our relationship and here's how we're  
3 gonna deal with it.=  
4 Patrick: =okay.  
5 (2.0)  
6 Sally: you're not Goings.  
7 ((Audience laughter sound effect))  
8 Patrick: I- I'm sor- sorry?  
9 Sally: I'm disallowing it.= ((makes a hand gesture))  
10 Patrick: =you're dis↑allowing it?= ((changes posture))  
11 Sally: =yup sorry. it's been disallowed now (.)  
12 there's nothing I can do:.  
13 Patrick: bu- but I didn't know there'd be disallowing.  
14 Sally: it's a relationship(.) we have to discuss things now  
15 Patrick(.) there is a time for just taking off and  
16 enjoying yourself and that time is over(.

17 → now we have to have hu:ge enormous discussions first (.)  
18 with crying.  
19 ((Audience laughter sound effect))



*Screenshot 7. Season 4 Episode 1, 06:34.*



*Screenshot 8. Season 4 Episode 1, 06:36.*

In line 14, Sally takes the floor for an extended turn and uses two hyperbolic items (huge and enormous) in line 17. ‘Huge’ is marked with an emphasis and a stretched vowel. In this example, huge and enormous co-occur to increase the hyperbolic effect, which is followed by an ALSE in line 19. Both of these items are within the category of ‘size, degree and intensity’ and are extremely hyperbole-prone. As can be seen in table 3 below, the words that indicate ‘size, degree and intensity’, -especially enormous, huge, gigantic, massive and endless - were found to be very hyperbole-prone in the Coupling corpus. ‘Enormous’, for instance, is the most frequent hyperbole in this category and has a hyperbole-proneness of 92.8 % in the

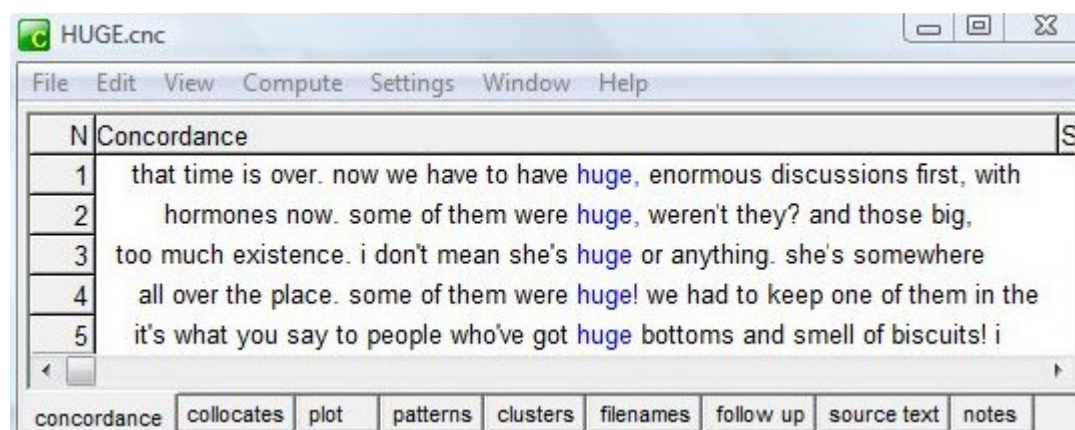


Coupling corpus. There is a very significant positive correlation to its use in CANCODE, with a hyperbole-proneness of 98 % (117 out of 119), as was found by McCarthy and Carter (ibid.). All uses of ‘huge’ were found to be hyperbolic in the Coupling corpus, which is again very similar to the findings in CANCODE (93 %).

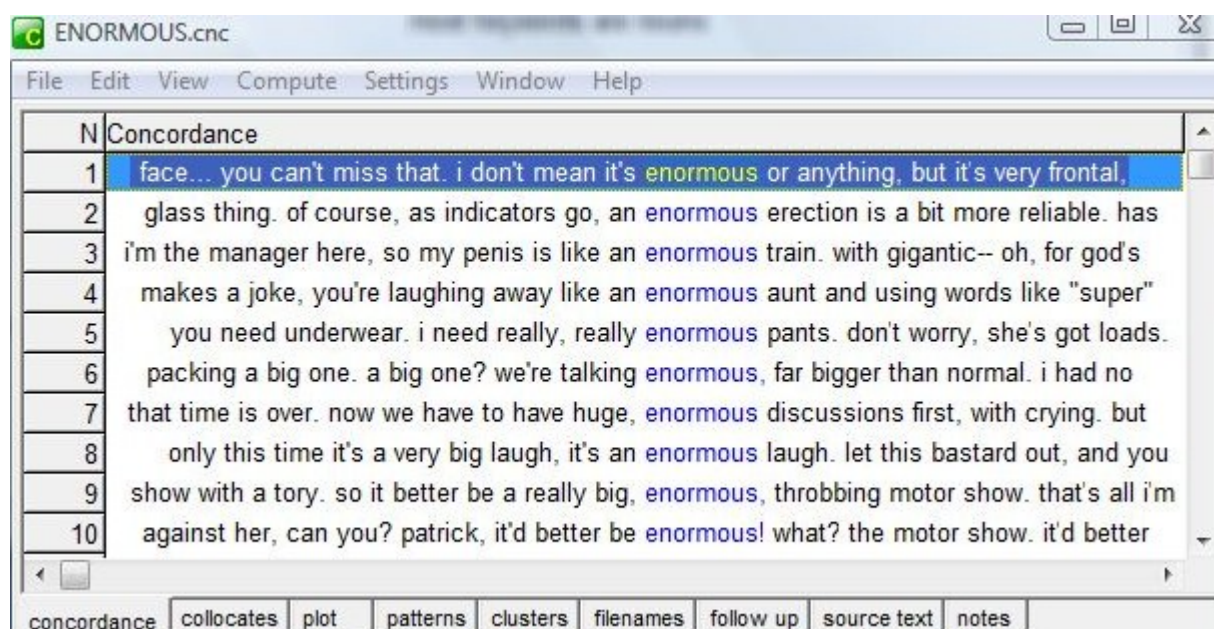
	Total	Hyperbolic	Rounded	CANCODE
Endless	1	1	100%	100%
Massive	3	3	100%	90%
Gigantic	2	2	100%	100%
Enormous	14	13	92,8%	98%
Huge	5	5	100%	93%
Vast	3	2	66,6%	60%
Nearly	18	1	5,5%	9%
Almost	14	0	0%	4%

**Table 3.** Size, degree and intensity (Coupling)

The concordance samples given below in figure 4 and 5 for ‘huge’ and ‘enormous’ illustrates the different contexts in which these frequent hyperbolic items occur. Further analysis can be carried out to investigate the phenomenon from different perspectives, each of which can be then considered for materials design for different purposes. Although one may argue that frequency lists and concordance lines represent a limited version of the context, in-depth analysis using a Conversation Analytic approach like the one performed in this section gives further insights on any phenomena being explored. Throughout the analysis performed, a wide array of linguistic, interactional and semiotic units enabled the phenomena to be approached from a multi-dimensional perspective. Prosodic elements, turn sequences, co-occurring and isolated lexical items, frequencies, embodied actions, and visual resources aided the investigation of hyperbole in conversations as an interactive and contextualised entity.



**Figure 4.** Sample concordance lines for 'huge' in Coupling corpus



**Figure 5.** Sample concordance lines for 'enormous' in Coupling corpus

Figures 6 and 7 in appendix 2 illustrate, on the basis of frequency, the correlation between the Coupling corpus and CANCODE in terms of different categories of hyperbole. Although it would be possible at this point to support these arguments through the analysis of further extracts, due to limitations of space, I will instead provide a short summary of the findings and educational implications for teaching interactional competence in EAL classes. Furthermore, different examples of hyperbole could be presented from an interactive framework, including superlatives and extreme positive adjectives, but the primary focus of the paper is how we can enhance the IC of students by using TV series.

## **7. Educational implications and conclusions**

Before discussing the educational implications,- that is the ways in which insights from the analyses in section 6 can contribute to learners and teachers in EAL classrooms, I will now summarize the overall findings in order to inform any kind of interactional and instructional outcomes, and try to link them to learners of English language. It is evident in the data that most of the hyperbolic uses, which indicate exaggeration or overstatement, are either followed by an ALSE or laughter by interlocutors. ALSE seems to affect the general organisation of turn taking, which results in lack of or minimal overlapping talk, extended wait times by the interactants and extended mutual gaze by the participants in the conversation. Lack of overlapping talk seems to be a divergent case considering its (though minimal) occurrence in everyday conversations. However, one of the basic rules of conversation, -that only one person speaks at a time- is fulfilled, and this is more meaningful for the reasons of clarity and comprehension, if materials are to be used in language classrooms. The second issue about ALSE, that it results in extended mutual gaze and wait times, can also be tolerated on the basis that this gives an opportunity for people who watch the DVDs to focus on the humorous effect and may contribute to the comprehension of humour especially for learners of English.

Change of state tokens signal shifts in footing and may be an early indicator of a humorous effect of hyperbole. Apart from the occurrences in the extracts given, this can also be tracked in the concordance lines given in the previous section. Another helpful contribution of the concordance lines given are that discourse markers like 'well' can be seen within the linguistic environment (co-text) of the selected items, and discourse markers were claimed to be surrounding hyperbolic usages in previous studies (e.g. McCarthy and Carter 2004). The analysis also showed that nervous speech can be accompanied by laughter (Glenn 2003). Other features of nervous speech were repetitions and change in the pace of talk (extract 3). Additionally, as was evident in extract 4, disallowance and reacting to disallowing are performed through hand gestures, change in posture, various forms of repairs and in the argumentative development of talk in general.

It is also given in the extracts that hyperbolic items are subject to prosodic marking like stress and sound extension. The examples here can be used to extend the knowledge of students on



prosody to discourse level, by showing how suprasegmentals play important roles within the sequences of talk by marking, for example emphasis. At a lexical level, it was found in the frequency analysis that the type of hyperbole that occurs more frequently is 'size, degree and intensity'. Therefore, awareness raising activities, for example showing the students sample extracts accompanied by video clips to teach them these items within contextualised conversations (like the ones we examined), could be very conducive to learners' vocabulary development. Another finding is the co-occurrence of hyperbolic items with each other and with other types of metaphoric language. The co-occurring items are most of the times followed by laughter that indicate a humorous effect.

Moreno Jaen and Peres Basanta (2009) clearly stated that there is considerable potential for researchers, textbook designers and teachers to take advantage of the new millennium DVD technology for embedding context in understanding and interpreting oral interactions as a fundamental prerequisite for improving students' productive conversational skills (p. 287). The DVDs of *Coupling*, therefore, can be regarded as multi-model texts that bring together linguistic, interactional, bodily and contextual sources together in the intersection of verbal and various semiotic sources. All extracts given in section 6 included examples of how interactants treat ongoing conversation as a site of embodied action. Use of carefully selected transcripts and video clips in the language classroom will provide learners with the best form of contextualisation; real life settings reflecting ordinary conversations (pubs, shops etc.), people with problems about relationships or shopping with whom the students can associate through mutual interests, audio-visual stimuli which creates and transfers meaning, and various interactional and linguistic resources provided by native speakers of English language. Different cultures will inevitably be represented in TV series as well; real world settings in different cities in the UK, various accents and dialects to make sense of (Jeff's Welsh accent, for instance), and interpersonal relations contextualised within the intersection of personal and cultural dynamics. Although everything seems satisfactory in theory, how can teachers use these valuable resources to enhance interactional competence? What kind of classroom activities and tasks can be used? Can TV series be used for lone-learning? How can we contribute to language teacher education to enhance teachers' skills to develop students' interactional skills?

Before discussing these issues, let us remember the definition and dynamics of interactional competence (IC) referred to as by Young (2008):

IC is a relationship between the participants' employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed. It is not an individual phenomenon, but is co-constructed by all participants in a particular discursive practice (p. 101).

According to this definition, first of all, it is clear that IC is far beyond the mainstream SLA understanding which puts employment of linguistic forms into the centre of its learning and teaching theories. The interactional resources, as mentioned in the definition, is nothing more than the details of our analysis performed in section 6: the resources used for the sequential organisation of talk like turn taking strategies, employment of repair etc., orienting to the context of situation and to the physical environment, and responding to whatever is relevant to the discursive practice at a given time and place (including the setting and interlocutors).

The multi-modal texts (like DVDs), then, are the most appropriate materials for interactional input in the classroom and beyond. Given the contextual advantages of authentic, or real-like materials (i.e. Coupling), the first step would be to create an interactional awareness in the students. I will now exemplify this by using extract 4 and its video clip at an intermediate level, adult learners classroom in a conversational skills module. The reason for selecting an adult learners classroom is (1) their potential associations with the characters in Coupling, (2) the inappropriateness of the language used for young learners (too much slang), and (3) the proficiency level required to understand the spoken language. At the beginning of the lesson, the students watch the video clip first without the transcript and then they are given the transcript with simplified transcription conventions. The teacher gives emphasis to how turn taking is achieved and the act of disallowing is performed by Sally and Patrick on a turn by turn basis, considering the repairs initiated by Patrick, and their bodily orientations to each other (gaze, posture), with a consideration of context. Language use around the ALSE is given attention (not necessarily a focus on hyperbole) and the students are asked to form pairs to discuss how this conversation is achieved to create an argumentative talk between the couple, and who do they support in this situation (Sally or Patrick). Then, each pair shares the ideas emerging from the discussions and shares it with the class. The final stage is preparing role plays and performing it (on voluntary basis) either during the next class or at the end of the current lesson.

Integrating such activities into speaking classes, in long term, will first of all raise the interactional awareness of the students with a focus on conversation as contextualised embodied action, and will lead to enhanced IC if students are given enough opportunities to perform such tasks. Students can also be encouraged to watch TV series of a similar type, which will help to enhance their IC out of the classroom, and bring selected materials to the classrooms. CA integrated language teacher education programs can be a good contribution to teacher training, in which in-service or pre-service teachers are given a CA training and are encouraged to critically reflect upon their own and their peers' teaching by making use of recordings and transcriptions, a model proposed by Walsh (2006) as he coined the teacher version of IC, which is L2 Classroom Interactional Competence. Recent studies bring further insights into how CA can contribute language teacher development (Seedhouse 2008; Seedhouse in press) and thus be conducive to EAL classrooms.

Further research directions may include a fine-detailed CA analysis of TV series, movies and various kinds of media for different languages. A large corpus of carefully analysed media can be formed, which will then be subject to a statistical corpus analysis. Categories in different genres and languages can be formed according to teaching and learning goals. A next step would be to empirically evaluate the use of these invaluable multi-text materials from various theoretical perspectives in different language teaching context. One particular research direction can be the analysis of learner-learner talk (by using Conversation Analysis) during classroom tasks (like the one suggested in this section) in order to reveal how materials discussed here can enhance Interactional Competence of language learners.

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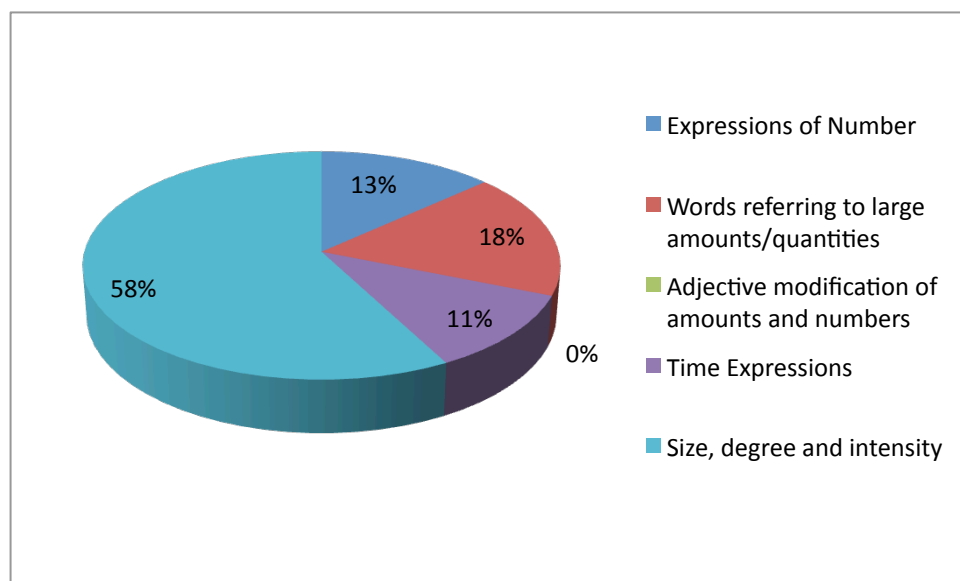
## Appendix 1 CA Transcription Conventions

[overlap]	Overlapping utterances – ( beginning [ ] and ( end ] )
=latched	Contiguous utterances (latching)
(0.4)	Represent the tenths of a second between utterances
(.)	Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)
stre:::tch	Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches)
sto-	An abrupt stop in articulation
.	Indicates a stopping fall in tone, with some sense of completion
°quiet°	Surrounds talk that is quieter
rise?	Question mark - Rising inflection (not necessarily a question)
<u>emphasis</u>	Underline words (or parts of) indicate emphasis
rise↑	Rising intonation
fall↓	Falling intonation
>quick>	Surrounds talk that is faster
<slow<	Surrounds talk that is slower
((description))	Analyst's notes
hhh	audible aspiration
.hhh	inhalation

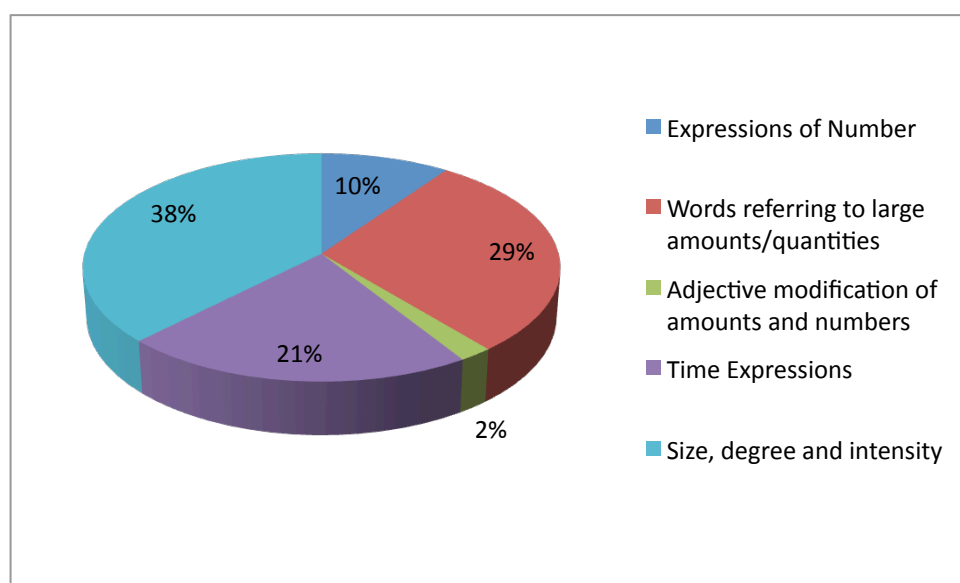
**(Adapted from Hutchby and Woofit 2008)**



**Appendix 2 (Adopted from Sert 2008, p.20)**



**Figure 7.** *Hyperboles in different categories (Coupling corpus)*



**Figure 8.** *Hyperboles in different categories (CANCODE)*